R E P O R T R E S U M E S

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EXPERIMENTAL USE OF UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN AUDIOLINGUAL SELF-INSTRUCTIONAL COURSE IN SPOKEN AMERICAN SPANISH.

INGLEWOOD UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT, CALIF.

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THE BASIC PURPOSES OF THIS STUDY WERE (1) TO DETERMINE THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN AUDIOLINGUAL SELF-INSTRUCTIONAL COURSE IN SPOKEN AMERICAN SPANISH COULD ASSIST THE ADULT STUDENT TO LEARN TO CONTROL THE SOUND SYSTEM OF THE LANGUAGE BEING STUDIED AND (2) TO PROVIDE EVIDENCE OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE COURSE OUTSIDE OF A LABORATORY SITUATION. THIRTEEN TEACHERS PARTICIPATED IN THE COURSE AS STUDENTS ON A VOLUNTARY BASIS. A QUALIFIED SPANISH TEACHER WAS EMPLOYED TO SUPERVISE AND GUIDE THEM. NONE OF THE STUDENTS COMPLETED THE COURSE. FAILURE TO FINISH APPEARED DUE TO (1) CONTINUED EFFORTS TO IMPROVE THE COURSE WHICH RESULTED IN NEARLY DOUBLING THE TIME REQUIRED FOR COMPLETION, (2) PART-TIME STUDY WHICH LIMITED TIME FOR WORK ON COURSE, AND (3) LACK OF MEANINGFUL KNOWLEDGE OF PROGRESS WHICH CAUSED LOSS OF MOTIVATION. RECOMMENDATIONS MADE WERE THAT--(1) THE COURSE SHOULD BE ADMINISTERED IN A FORMAL CLASSROOM, (2) MOTIVATION SHOULD BE IMPROVED BY PROVIDING MEANINGFUL FEEDBACK, AND (3) THE FEWER FRAMES SHOULD BE USED TO REDUCE REPETITIOUSNESS AND THE LENGTH OF TIME REQUIRED TO TAKE THE COURSE. (AL)

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INGLEWOOD UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
Inglewood, California

Experimental Use of University of Michigan Audio-Lingual Self-Instructional Course in Spoken American Spanish

1. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In 1961 the State Legislature of California made the teaching of a foreign language mandatory in the sixth grade, effective 1965. Inglewood Unified School District selected Spanish as the modern foreign language to be incorporated as part of the regular instructional program. Of immediate concern was the need to find qualified teachers in this area. As one possible solution the school district entered into an agreement with the U. S. Office of Education for the purpose of experimenting with the audio-lingual self-instructional course in spoken American Spanish developed by F. Rand Morton of the University of Michigan.

2. PURPOSES OF THIS STUDY

There were two basic purposes of this study:

1. To determine the extent to which this particular course can assist the adult student learn to control the sound system of the language being studied.

2. To provide evidence of the effectiveness of the course outside of a laboratory situation.

3. PROCEDURES

Thirteen adult students were selected to participate in this course. Participation was on a voluntary basis. All participants were teachers employed by the Inglewood Unified School District. All were provided with a tape recorder and a set of tapes. They were to proceed through the material at their own rate. The students worked on the course in the evening and on weekends in order not to interfer with their regular full-time teaching schedule. A qualified Spanish teacher was employed to supervise and guide them.

Meetings have been scheduled with students on a minimum of once per month. In addition, the teacher has maintained contact with each student. The Modern Language Aptitude Test was administered prior to starting the course. ML Cooperative Classroom Achievement Test for Spanish was to be administered at the termination of the course. In addition to the objective data, students were to be evaluated by a team of two individuals, the teacher and another specialist in Spanish, at the termination of the course. This experimental use of the programmed material was to be conducted beginning October 15, 1963 and ending August 31, 1964. In actual practice, the materials did not arrive until late in November 1963. Students did not begin to work until the Christmas holidays of that year.

4. DESCRIPTION OF THE AUDIO-LINGUAL INSTRUCTIONAL COURSE

This course has been described by Dr. F. Rand Morton[1] as follows:

> "A self-instructional programmed course requiring between 160 to 225 hours of student response time to achieve the following pre-specified linguistic terminal behaviors:
>
> 1) Mastery of standard phonological system of language as demonstrated by use of discrimatory abilities in echoic vocal behavior similar to those of a 10 year old native speaker.
>
> 2) A manipulative ability in the language permitting an appropriate vocal response to any verbal behavior with which confronted within the typical repertory of a 10 year old native of the language.
>
> 3) An active standard vocabulary of no less than 1,500 lexical items.
>
> 4) The ability to immediately expand and enlarge the terminal linguistic repertory with experience in a foreign country which is spoken."

This course consists of four tasks. In each task the student is supplied with a set of tapes and a student workbook.

Task I is entitled Phonematization of the Sounds of Spanish. In this task, the student learns to correctly hear the sounds of the new language. This is accomplished before the student attempts to reproduce the sounds themselves. The work in this task is essentially repetitive drill in which the student is given a symbol to represent each sound. He practices drawing this symbol in response to the sounds on the tape. Task I consists of 270 frames. The completion of each frame may take from 4 to 60 minutes depending upon the ease with which the student can handle the material. Each frame provides for an indication of:

Number of mistakes
Student's grade for frame
Indication of the level of difficulty of each frame
Student's self grade
Timing of the Frame
Number of trials for each frame

Task II is entitled Vocalization. In this task the student learns how to make the sounds they have learned to hear. In this task the student responds verbally as

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[1] Morton, F. Rand, Introduction to Task I - Workbook, Self-Instructional Course in Spoken American Spanish.

well as in writing to the sounds on the tape. Task II consists of 349 frames structured essentially the same as those in Task I.

Task III is entitled Acoustic Signifiers. In this task the student responds to Spanish utterances through combining sounds to make words and phrases. At this stage the student does not understand what he is saying. This task includes 481 frames. Each frame takes from 4 to 60 minutes depending upon the ease with which the student can handle the material. Again the frames provide for grading, both of the frame and of the student, as well as an indication of time, trials, and difficulty.

Task IV is entitled Structural Patterns. In this task the student works with individual or small groups of sounds, or combinations of many sounds. He begins to acquire some meaning in relation to the utterance he is making. This task consists of ten sets of frames. Frames provide for the indication of the number of trials, the time, and difficulty.

It should be stressed that this course is in a developmental stage. The Inglewood Unified School District students were the first in the United States to attempt this course outside of a laboratory situation. Currently a fifth task is being developed for the course. This task is entitled Generative Verbal Behavior. The entire course includes five student workbooks corresponding to the five tasks, tape recordings covering 2,000 frames, voicing scripts, instructions for each task, and a teacher's handbook.

5. PARTICIPANTS

All thirteen students participating in this course were college graduates and all were working as professional educators. Their specific professional assignments as of January 1, 1964 were:

Fourth grade teacher	1
Fifth grade teacher	4
Sixth grade teacher	3
Elementary School Principal	1
Elementary home teacher	1
Junior High teacher	3

The group consisted of eight women and five men. Five of the group had previously studied Spanish in high school, three had studied the subject in college. No one in the group felt that they had mastered the language nor could they converse with others in Spanish.

At the outset of the course, the Spanish students were given the Modern Language Aptitude Test, Form A. Results of this test are reported in Table I.

TABLE I

RAW SCORE AND PERCENTILE RESULTS, MODERN LANGUAGE APTITUDE TEST, FORM - A
(College Freshman Norms)

	Raw Score	Percentile
Mean	118.3	
S.D.	36.0	
Range	54-165	3 - 99+
Median	126	60
Q3	162	99
Q1	108	40

6. RESULTS OF PROJECT

Below is a description of the students progress as indicated in Technical Progress Reports dated January 1, 1964, April 1, 1964, and October 1, 1964.

January 1, 1964. All materials were distributed to the students during the first week of December. The original reactions of the students to the material as they began Task I were both positive and enthusiastic. One concern expressed by the students relates to the time limit for the project. There seemed to be some question as to the August 31 deadline. The group felt more time was necessary.

April 1, 1964. All thirteen students were continuing their work with the course. Six of the thirteen had started on Task II; the others were still working on Task I. At this stage, three of the students who were on Task I were far enough behind to be considered potential drop-outs. After approximately four months of working on the course, the total group had accomplished the following: The mean frame number 222, range 66 to 345. Average repetitions of frames, 1.92.

The general comments at that time were as follows:

1. Asking a student to work through a frame perfectly can be very discouraging.

2. A few frames were too fast to make the extra marks on the letters not ordinarily used in English.

3. There are certain frames in Task I where two accent marks were expected on the answers.

4. I am finding it more difficult to schedule time for Task II since it demands more from me physically and requires a perfectly quiet environment.

5. I am enjoying the course very much, but I feel quite frustrated at present making the sounds and evaluating them, but I hope, with practice, things will improve.

Generally, the concerns of the group revolved around motivation and the pressure of time to complete the course. All the adults connected with the project felt that the August 31 termination date is an impossible one which to adhere.

October 1, 1964. During the summer, the U. S. Office granted an extension for the project to April 14, 1965. On the above date, five of the original thirteen students remained as part of the program. Of the eight who dropped, two have moved away from the area and are unable to complete the course as part of the experimental program in Inglewood. The other six have dropped the course due to the lack of time and motivation. One of the most recent drop-outs made the following comment:

> "I have developed a mental block against the course. I have been too involved in other things and I have a guilty conscience." This particular student had completed all frames up to number 304 and reported an average of two or three repetitions for each frame.

Another drop-out indicated that she cannot continue because of lack of time and she felt guilty about it but she had no choice. This person completed frame number 295 and reported an average of slightly above one repetition per frame.

In order to provide a greater level of motivation for students, they were offered 50¢ for every tape they completed in Task III. Following this announcement, another survey was completed with the following results:

1. Mean number of frames completed - 328 range - 175 to 465
2. Mean number of repetitions per frame - 1.8 range - 1 to 2
3. Comments and reactions to course:
   a. "Getting more difficult."
   b. "Getting difficult."
   c. "I think the course is very good, however, because of insufficient time for my college courses, it will be a hardship to complete the course under the present circumstances."
   d. "I slowed way down last summer but plan to stick it out."
   e. "I haven't touched it for many weeks, but I am still anxious to finish. I believe I am going to work out my schedule so I can get back on the ball."
4. Type of frames which seemed most difficult:
   a. Reading written grammalog, long ones without a model spoken first.

b. Chaining
c. Frames involving N and M

5. Type of frames which seemed least difficult:

a. Repeating model spoken
b. Reading
c. Discrimination
d. None in particular

It seemed apparent from the data that the attempt to stimulate greater effort through offering a financial reward had not been effective.

Generally, those students who remained with the course had not worked at a rate which is consistent with the termination date of April. A very serious problem found in this course is that of motivation. The general impression of the group is that this difficulty would be reduced in a more formal learning environment such as a classroom situation.

By February 15, 1965, all original students had dropped out of the course. Failure of students to finish the course seemed to be due to the following:

1. The original task was defined as involving 68 tapes and approximately 200 hours of working time. As a result of continued attempts, to improve the course at the University of Michigan, the course developed to include the equivalent of 139 tapes, and approximately twice the amount of time necessary for its completion. Students who complete Task II spent approximately the amount of time originally indicated as necessary for the entire course.

2. The fact that students were limited to working on course during evening hours and during weekends apparently tended to slow their working time per frame as compared to students working in a formal setting. This too, tended to add to the total time involved to complete the course. At the rate of four or five hours per week this course would take approximately two years to complete.

3. Motivation is the serious problem facing students in this course. Students become rather easily frustrated, in part as a result of their lack of meaningful knowledge of their progress.

It should be noted that drop-outs consistently expressed ambiguous feelings concerning their termination of the course. All students felt guilty and concerned that they were unable to finish.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This course offers promise if the shortcomings faced by students in this project can be overcome. Based upon this fact, the following recommendations are made:

1. This course be administered in a formal classroom setting with a large number of pupils. In this way, the problems of motivation can be more easily subject to experimental design.

2. Teach comprehension beginning near end of Task II as a means of providing meaningful feedback to students, thereby providing a basis for motivation.

3. Reduce the number of frames. This will reduce the length of time necessary for completion of the course and will reduce the repetitiousness of the learning.

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